Varieties of Freedom*

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We are not free to cease being free.

*Being and Nothingness*
— Jean Paul Sartre

Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose.

“Me and Bobby McGee”
— Janis Joplin

Abstract

It should not be surprising that humans, as individually self-aware members of an ultrasocial species, are deeply conflicted by the concept of freedom. Being free means different things to different people; moreover, people often disagree about how much freedom can, or should, be had by their conspecifics, or even by themselves. In this advanced seminar, we shall discuss some of the questions that arise with regard to freedom, sampling from a range of disciplines, including evolution, history, anthropology, politics, philosophy, psychology, and education.

*Version 0, October 30, 2020. This is a provisional reading list; comments and suggestions are welcome!
1 Key themes and readings

A partial and provisional list of themes, in no particular order.

Preliminaries


Evolution


History and geography


Anthropology


**Politics**


**Philosophy**


Psychology


Education


References


Voiland, E. (2007). We recognize ourselves as being similar to others: implications of the “social brain hypothesis” for the biological evolution of the intuition of freedom. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 5(3), 442–452.

